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Amherst's Historic & Cultural Resources Current Conditions

Historic Resource Highlights

- Well preserved late 18th and early 19th century era village with many historic buildings surrounding a central common, listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- Natural beauty, open space, and agricultural land surrounding the village
- Scenic roads shaded by mature trees and miles of stonewalls trailing through woodlands
- Dark night skies—lack of light pollution
- One of New Hampshire's oldest burial grounds, dating to 1735 and the birthplace of Horace Greeley
- An historical society that manages a collection of town-related material, operates two museums, and sponsors an array of historical programs
- A heritage commission leading efforts to identify and preserve historical and cultural resources throughout town
- Beauty of scenic roads disturbed by truck and fast moving car traffic
- An unsafe pedestrian and bike environment in the village area and beyond
- A sprawling commercial corridor (Route 101A) that visually conflicts with the town's character

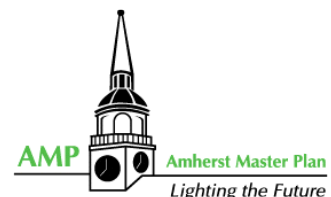
Cultural Resource Highlights

- An excellent public library—the Amherst Town Library— with an array of resources and long hours of operation
- Amherst Town Band, Souhegan Valley Chorus and several other cultural organizations exploring many forms of the performing arts
- Many yearly cultural activities including an Easter egg hunt, Fourth of July celebration, and “Trick-or – Treat in the Village” —that contribute to the quality of life in

What Does It Mean?

- Amherst has a rich heritage worthy of pride and protection.
- Amherst's sense of place is largely defined by its historic village and green, juxtaposed against stretches of agricultural land.
- Residents place great value on town's cultural traditions that combine with historic buildings and landscapes to define Amherst's character.
- Many of these historic and cultural assets are unprotected and some suffer from traffic, overhead utilities, and lack of support.
- The character of the town is changing. For many years, it consisted of a central village with many outlying farms centered around one-room schools. Much of the farmland is being developed.
- Uncontrolled development (both commercial and residential) and absence of design standards threaten the historic and cultural character of the town.

See draft section of Amherst's 2008 Master Plan Phase 1 report for additional details and sources.



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Amherst's History & Culture What We Want

Voice of Amherst¹

"Our historic buildings and landscapes help define our town character."

"Amherst's scenic roads, bridges, stonewalls, country lanes, views, and large tracts of land add to the town's appearance and need protection."

"Truck and fast-moving car traffic through the town and Village have made the pedestrian environment unsafe."

"The development of big-box stores and strip malls along Route 101A has detracted from Amherst's historic and rural character."

"Amherst's rural land seems to be disappearing and residential subdivisions seem to be appearing everywhere. Development is not controlled. Amherst is not a rural town anymore—it is becoming a suburb."

Goals to Light the Future²

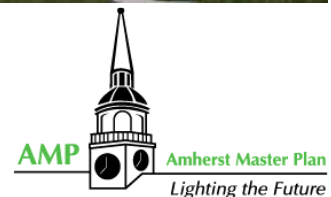
Continue to preserve and protect rural landscapes that define and contribute to the town's identity, including farms, fields, barns, fences, etc.

- Continue to preserve and protect rural landscapes that define and contribute to the town's identity
- Provide further protection for historic and cultural resources in and around Amherst Village
- Preserve and protect historic and cultural resources outside the Amherst Village area
- Preserve and expand organized events and other cultural activities that enrich and contribute to community character.



¹ Resident input, based on various visioning exercises.

² Developed based on Steering Committee and resident input..



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Amherst's History & Culture What We Can Do ¹

To Continue to Preserve and Protect Rural Landscapes that Define and Contribute to the Town's Identity

1. In conjunction with town-wide land conservation efforts, continue to develop an inventory of rural landscapes including farms, water bodies, shorelines, important viewsheds and ridgelines.
2. Also in conjunction with town-wide lands conservation efforts, provide creative zoning and subdivision regulations that maximize preservation of rural landscapes.

To Provide Further Protection for Historic & Cultural Resources in Amherst Village

1. Develop plans for preserving/enhancing entrances to the Village, including removal of utilities, elimination of excess asphalt, installing appropriate street lighting, and other measures as defined in the approved town hall environs improvement plan.
2. Develop and implement measures to reduce the speed of traffic through the Village.
3. Design and make improvements to the Village Green and Town Hall environs.
4. Develop a design and management plan for long-term use and care of the Village Green, including provisions for increased use of the Green for cultural activities.

To Preserve and Protect Historic & Cultural Resources Outside the Village Area

1. Expand the existing inventory of historic properties to include a town-wide historical/cultural inventory.
2. From this expanded inventory, identify potential areas for historic district designations, including historic residential areas.
3. Also from this inventory, identify remaining historic farms and develop strategies for protecting farm buildings, land, stone-walls, and other historic features.
4. Adopt a demolition delay ordinance for properties listed on the town-wide inventory of historic and cultural resources.
5. Revise Amherst's landscaping requirements so that they better reflect the rural character of Amherst.
6. Incorporate historic and cultural resource protection provisions in Amherst's zoning ordinance.

To Preserve and Expand Organized Events & Other Cultural Activities

1. Take actions that support existing activities and events (e.g. provide a band shell in the Village Green, provide shelters/pavilions, etc.).
2. Consider support and facilities for expanded set of cultural activities.

¹ Potential objectives and strategies for discussion.